

RUTH ANNA LINDLEY.


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ACCOUNT

OF

RUTH ANNA LINDLEY

A MINISTER OF THE GOSPEL IN THE RELIGIOUS
SOCIETY OF FRIENDS.



PHILADELPHIA:
TO BE HAD AT FRIENDS' BOOK STORE,
No. 304 ARCH STREET.

WM. H. PILE'S SONS, PRINTERS.

PREFATORY REMARKS.

“There is a path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture’s eye hath not seen; the lion’s whelps have not trodden it, nor the fierce lion passed by it.”—Job. xxviii: verse 7.

Under a fresh feeling of interest for the best welfare of the younger members of our religious Society, as well as for others, the following instructive narrative of the exercises and faithfulness of one young in years, is now republished, with some additions from other sources.

Ruth Anna Lindley was not by birth a member of the religious Society of Friends, and like Paul, who declared, in regard to his ministry: “I neither received it of men, neither was I taught it but by the revelation of Jesus Christ,” it appears that the principles and testimonies of Truth, which she was constrained to adopt, were not received by her through education, but from the operations of the Holy Spirit upon her mind.

Truth does not change. The words of our dear Saviour have as much force now as ever they had: “He that taketh not up his cross and followeth after me is not worthy of me.” The spirit of that

dear Saviour which led her, and has led many, many others into the path of self-denial and to show to the world on whose side they were, is the same that ever it was. There is a spirit of false liberty abroad which would lay waste our testimonies, but surely, the same spirit which led our forefathers out of the world will not now lead others back into it. It must be another spirit, and it would be well for all of us to look closely to see by what spirit we are governed.

Thousands have been brought into deep repentance for having lived lives of gayety and worldly compliance, none have ever regretted when they came to die that they had led lives of self-denial. It is with an earnest desire that the feet of some may be plucked from the entangling net of transient, worldly pleasures, to spare them the pains of bitter repentance and to turn their feet into paths of true peace and permanent happiness, that this little account is now offered and an attentive perusal invited, fervently desiring that the Divine blessing may rest upon it.

W. P. T.

WEST CHESTER, Fourth Month, 1893.

Ruth Anna Lindley

Ruth Anna Lindley was the daughter of Thomas and Martha (Potts) Rutter, and was born First Month 3rd, 1768, at Pottstown, Montgomery County, Pennsylvania. She was received as a member by Exeter Monthly Meeting of Friends, Fourth Month 25th, 1787, and recommended by that Meeting as a minister, Fourth Month 24th, 1793. She married Jacob Lindley, an approved minister,* Sixth Month 26th, 1800, and removed to New Garden, Chester County, where she died, Ninth Month 10th, 1810.† She was educated as an Episcopalian. It is said that she was attractive in her personal appearance, refined and agreeable in manner; and possessing the true Christian graces, her society was much enjoyed by those who knew her.

From an account prepared by some of her friends soon after her decease, the following information has been compiled respecting her.

* Of whom an interesting account may be found in "Biographical Sketches and Anecdotes of Friends." Friends' Book Store, No. 304 Arch Street, Philadelphia.

† By this marriage there were three sons; two of whom survived their mother, viz: Thomas Rutter Lindley, who died unmarried, First Month 12th, 1842, and William Lindley, who also never married, and died at Duncannon, Pa., about 1884.

In this brief sketch, as in others of a similar character, it is confirming and encouraging to notice how the entire surrender of the human to the Divine will was followed by the enriching blessing of a peaceful, happy life here, and closed with bright hopes of eternal happiness in that which is to come. Being made sensible of the spiritual benefit of silent waiting, she used generally, when at home, to assign a portion of the day for retirement, meditation or reading the Scriptures; in which she took great delight.

It appears she was early furnished with an evidence that a dispensation of the gospel would, if she was faithful, be committed to her. Under this solemn prospect many conflicts were endured before she became resigned to the work, but after many deep probations and secret tears she became willing to acknowledge before men how much she owed to her Lord, and even to appear as a fool for his sake.

In the exercise of her gift she was frequently enabled to sympathize with the mourners in Zion and to hold forth to these the doctrine of consolation. Towards the rising generation she was often drawn forth in the language of invitation to come, taste and see the goodness of the Lord to the humble, dedicated soul, and was led at times to recount the merciful dealings of the Heavenly Shep-

herd with her during her youth, and to bear her testimony to the soul-enriching joys which attend an unreserved obedience to the manifestations of his will.

To the formal, lukewarm professors her testimony was often close and awakening, being solicitous that none might rest their hopes of acceptance upon anything short of inward purity, effected by the cleansing operation of the spirit of Truth. She travelled into some of the New England States, and was frequently engaged in visits to meetings nearer home, in which services the precious covering of her spirit, and her tender solicitude for the essential well-being of all gave her much place in the minds of those to whom she was concerned to minister.

During the latter years of her life she was subject to much bodily infirmity, yet her zeal for the attendance of religious meetings and the promotion of her Master's cause, continued. It was her practice, even when young in years, frequently to collect the servants of the family on First-day afternoons and read the Holy Scriptures in their hearing. She was also concerned to discourage the practice of spending that day in unprofitable visits and unsavory conversation.

When infirmity had so much increased as to confine her mostly at home, she would sometimes inquire of her husband, upon his return from meet-

ing, how they had fared, and would frequently testify that she had had a blessed meeting in her chamber during his absence.

During the progress of her last illness her mind appeared deeply centred in the love of her Heavenly Father, and raised above the fear of death. Though a large portion of bodily suffering was her lot, she was not heard to utter a murmur or complaint nor even a wish for better health, but frequently desired that she might be furnished with patience to hold out to the end. Her soul was frequently so filled with heavenly joy that she would break forth into ejaculations to her blessed Master for his bountiful dealings with her.

About a week before her decease, two relatives taking leave of her, she desired them to sit down, and, after a short pause, was enabled to bear a living testimony to the goodness of the Lord to his humbled children, and feelingly exhorted them to yield an unreserved obedience to the manifestations of Divine light. Addressing herself to one of them, a young man, she admonished him to make an early surrender to Divine requirements, saying "An early sacrifice was acceptable to God," and that her early dedication afforded much peace at that awful season.

To some sitting by her she said, on another occasion: "Pray for me, but do not weep for me, for I

apprehend that I have a sharp conflict to pass through. Oh, that patience may be vouchsafed to the end."

She quietly departed, like one falling into a sweet sleep, on the tenth of the Ninth Month, 1810, aged upwards of forty-two years, having been a minister about twenty years.

The following is a letter of Ruth Anna Lindley, addressed to a beloved cousin :

"PHILADELPHIA, Fourth Mo. 5th, 1804.

"To M. H.:—I find by the letters addressed to thy dear sister that my beloved cousin has some desire that I would write to her.

"Alas! my dear creature, what can I say? It is but little we can do for one another, yet perhaps there are seasons wherein we may, under Divine influence, be rendered in some degree useful. Oh! my dear cousin, the companion of my early years, how oft on the bended knee, in the secret chamber, have my aspirations been that the Lord from on high would graciously condescend to visit thy soul. I saw that thou wast endued with more than one talent, and I wished them dedicated to the Lord. I was, for a season, amongst you as a spectacle unto angels and to men; but of latter time have thought I have seen of the travail of my soul, and am satisfied in some measure. Oh! to find that some of

my endeared connections are truly awakened to a sense of religion and have turned their faces Zionward, is more rejoicing to my soul than the increase of corn, wine or oil. My dear, be not dismayed nor discouraged at the fiery trials that may be permitted to attend thee. Oh! bear the turnings and overturnings, even all the refining operations of the Divine hand upon thee.

“Be willing to become as the passive clay—moulded and fashioned according to the gracious design of an all-wise Director; and, my love, remember that it was not in the whirlwind, the fire or the earthquake that the Lord was pleased to make Himself known, but in the still, small voice.

“It is, my dear, in the silence of all flesh that we are most capable of hearing and of being instructed by the Shepherd’s voice. May I not say I have experienced this? Yes, my cousin, even when surrounded by temptations, even when the floods of discouragement have been ready to overwhelm, I have retired to my chamber and prostrated myself at the footstool of mercy, and although, at times, my intercession was not in any form of words, but in secret, inward breathings, my gracious Master condescended to hear me, and caused me to experience a renewal of inward strength, so that I was enabled to persevere in what I believed to be required of me.

“And oh ! my dear friend, may thou be encouraged to hold on thy way ; attend and be faithful even in the little, in the day of small things. Whatsoever the Master biddeth thee do, that do, and I am comforted in the sweet persuasion that there are blessings in store for thee, and that thou wilt be a blessing to thy dear sisters, as well as to many in that place. Oh ! Pottsgrove,* the land of my nativity, how I have longed to see religion abound within thy borders ! How have I travailed, in the secret of my soul, both by night and by day, that the inhabitants might be awakened. How have I proclaimed, as I believe, under Divine influence, the necessity of living holy lives, and on the bended knee have implored that the number of Zion’s votaries might be increased.

“ Well, my dear, may the Lord God Almighty bless and preserve thee in the line of Divine rectitude. May the angel of his presence encamp round about you as a family. And oh ! saith my soul, that none of the gracious designs of Israel’s Shepherd may be frustrated by an improper withholding on your part, but resign yourselves, your all into his holy hand, and He will assuredly perfect the glorious work He has begun in your dear minds.

“ I must conclude and subscribe, thy deeply and tenderly interested friend and cousin,

RUTH ANNA LINDLEY.

* Now Pottstown, 1893.

ACCOUNT OF THE EARLY RELIGIOUS EXERCISES
AND CONVINCEMENT OF RUTH ANNA RUTTER
(AFTERWARDS LINDLEY,) WRITTEN BY HER-
SELF.

I trust it is under a degree of the influence of the blessed Truth that I now take up my pen, in order to commemorate the tender dealings of an Almighty and most merciful Father towards me in the morning of my day ; that if I am continued in this vale of mortality to future years my heart, may be reverently bowed in gratitude, in taking a little retrospect thereof.

It pleased my Heavenly Father to incline my heart to seek Him from my infancy, and about the fourteenth year of my age I was favored with a remarkable visitation, the beginning of which I was thus made sensible of. One day, being much interested in a little piece of work, and confining myself to my chamber, many serious reflections presented themselves. In the evening, sitting in the parlor with my parents, brothers and sisters, I burst into tears, and, all leaving the room, except my dear mother, she asked the occasion of my uneasiness. I told her I was just thinking, if it should please the Almighty to call me before the

light of another day, whether I was in a fit situation to appear before his great Majesty? She spoke suitably to me, and said she made no doubt if I sought properly to be rendered worthy an inheritance in the kingdom I should gain it. But I felt great distress that night, and my concern continued for some time.

One evening, being left alone with my dear mother, and having some desire of improvement, I asked her what books would be suitable for me to read? She answered, "There is none more suitable than the Bible." This reply affected me, and she took that opportunity of querying with me, what society I thought I should join? I told her I believed I should be a Quaker. Indeed, I saw it clearly to be my duty to leave off several of my flounces and superfluous things, and felt peace in giving up thereto: but, through unwatchfulness, I lost ground and became again captivated and ensnared in the vain fashions and customs of the world. My sister being about to accomplish her marriage, several new things were provided for me on the occasion. I put on a cushion* and dressed in the most fashionable style for girls of my age. I joined in all the levity and mirth that was going forward, and was at times much elated. But, alas, that innocence and calm serenity of mind with

* An head-dress fashionable at that time.

which I had been favored while I lived in the cross to my natural inclination was no longer in my possession. Every enjoyment carried with it a sting, and I felt a void which I cannot express, but which no doubt proceeded from the absence of my Beloved. Nevertheless, I pursued a gay line of life till turned of seventeen, though I had often to recur to that season wherein I was favored with religious thoughtfulness, and in secret lamented my situation.

In the fall preceding the change in my dress my sister invited me to spend the winter with her, in order to introduce me into company. I accordingly went, and frequented the dancing assemblies, theatre and all places of amusement that were usual. I also learned music, having a master to attend me, and made great proficiency therein, as I had a natural ear and uncommon fondness for it. I promised myself much pleasure, and thought it would fill up many vacant hours which I should have in the country, for, from the sensation that often attended my mind, I thought I should not long continue in the circle I was then in.

Through the course of the winter, I have since thought, I was under a very tender visitation of Divine love, though at that time I knew it not. My mind was, at seasons, so absorbed that, when paying formal visits and surrounded with company I scarce knew what passed, and but few expressions

escaped my lips, so that my friends would often tell me I was extremely silent, and laugh at me for it. And, indeed, I was, at times, almost ready to conclude there was a great degree of insensibility in me and a natural uneasiness of disposition, for, notwithstanding no exertion of my friends nor expense of my parents was spared to render everything agreeable to me, I was not happy. When under the hands of the hair-dressers, tears would stream from my eyes, though I could not tell the cause; but, doubtless, it was the cords of Thy Divine love, oh, my Beloved, operating in me, in order that I might become wholly thine!

I well remember one afternoon, being engaged upon a large party, I went up stairs to dress, and sat before the glass, attempting to crape my hair, but not considering what I was about, being in deep thought; it grew late and I was hurried, and not readily finding some of my finery which I wanted to put on, it flustered me, and I felt myself entangled in those things; which gave me much pain and anxiety, without knowing where to seek relief. I threw myself upon the bed in great agony of mind and gave vent to many tears, but after some time I arose, went down stairs and made excuse to my sister, who expected to see me in full dress. But truly, my mind was not in a fit condition to join a large company, though I strove to

hide the real cause. At another time, going with some company to see a pantomime performed, my mind was so abstracted from the objects around me that I could pay no attention to the scene, but felt a dejection and distress not easily to be conceived.

The last ball I attended was given by some young men of my acquaintance; my sister had a dance the preceding evening at her own house, and I, being much fatigued, wished to have excused myself from going to the ball, but it being a set company and my friends pressing me to go, I yielded and went, but had not danced more than two or three dances before I again felt deep distress and dismay to cover my mind. I called my brother and told him I was not well, desiring him to call one of the servants, who were in waiting, to go home with me, as I wished to leave the room unobserved, which he accordingly did, and my sister expressing her surprise at my quick return, I pleaded indisposition and went to bed.

Soon after this I lost an uncle, and he dying suddenly, it greatly shocked and affected me. The next First-day evening, being the time of the Spring meeting, and an evening meeting being held at Pine Street, a connection of mine asked me to go there with her. I had frequently in the course of the winter gone in there, when my sister would go

on to church (we lived but two doors from the meeting-house). She and her husband would sometimes smile and tell me they believed I intended to be a Quaker. I did not know it would so soon be the case, but I felt a secret satisfaction in attending their meetings. I generally sat near the door or in the back part of the house, lest my appearance should attract their attention. In the evening above alluded to we had not sat long before a Friend got up and spoke, and as he seemed tedious, my companion soon got tired and proposed going, but I chose to stay, and she left me. After some time, dear Daniel Offley appeared largely in testimony. He mentioned the prospect he had of some youth, then present, having a great work to do and spoke so clearly to my state that I was much struck with it, but knew not at that time it was intended for me, and thought how deeply those must feel for whom it was meant. But although I did not at that time take it to myself, I had afterwards cause to remember that solemn testimony, and it was a strength to me.

About the middle of the Fourth Month I returned home, and soon after was invited to attend a wedding, and being again in a very thoughtless state, I was pleased with the thoughts of having the opportunity to display my fine clothes. A few nights before the wedding I had a dream which

made considerable impression upon my mind, and the next day, sitting with a near connection, with whom I was very intimate, I related it to her and told her I believed there would shortly be a death in the family. While we were conversing together there seemed to be a cloud or mist which overshadowed me, and I felt as if I was raised off the chair. I believe I was at the moment insensible to everything around me. My countenance changed, and my cousin, in some surprise, asked me what was the matter. I told her I felt very strange, and burst into a flood of tears. When I a little recovered I told her if nothing happened to myself or in the family, never to mention the situation I had been in. My mind then became very awfully impressed with the thoughts of death and the necessity of being prepared. On the succeeding day I heard of the decease of a little cousin, who died of a short illness, and when we were assembled to attend the burial, two children out of one family were carried by the door, who both died of the same disease. All these things had a tendency, deeply and awfully, to impress my mind. I seemed in a state of amazement and distress, and was willing to deliver myself up to the Lord, but knew not what step to take. All was dark and gloomy before me. May I never forget the night I passed after that funeral; a thick veil of darkness seemed to cover me, and the terrors

of an angry God encompassed me about. A near relation slept with me, who had taken a serious turn some time before ; she spoke encouragingly to me ; but alas, my mind was not in a fit state to receive it. The next day my parents came home, having been absent some time. I shed abundance of tears, which they, not knowing the real cause, attributed to the deep sympathy I had for my afflicted relations.

The young woman whose wedding I had been invited to, was married according to appointment, but I felt no disposition to attend the marriage, being sorely distressed in mind. The day following I paid her a morning visit, though I scarce knew where I was or what I was about. For six weeks I experienced a state of deep conflict and exercise. My dress became very burdensome to me, and the fear of not having stability deterred me from changing it. In the course of that time I spent a week with some Methodist relations. Their minister came while I was there, and I attended their meeting, with which I was much pleased, my mind being in a very tender state. They also invited me to attend their class-meeting, but I did not feel the same unity with that ; however, I believed them to be a seeking people, and became greatly attached to them, and thought I should join the society. But after my return home, still feeling some doubts, and not that peace and confirmation which, above all

things, I desired, at times, when a little strength was afforded, my prayers were put up in secret, that I might be rightly directed. But oh, I knew not what to do, nor which way to turn myself for peace of mind.

One day, being in great distress, my endeared mother came to the door of my chamber, and I opened it; she came in, and seeing my situation, she kneeled down and prayed fervently for my preservation. At another time she came to me in my chamber, and I, being in great agony, threw my arms around her and asked her what I should do. She told me there was no necessity for my being so greatly distressed, as I was young and innocent. But still, feeling my dress a very great burthen to me and through fear of running too fast, it greatly afflicted me, and one day, being retired, I threw myself upon my knees and took up the Bible, which lay by the bedside, scarce knowing what I did, and opened upon this passage: "Put off thy ornaments from thee, that I may know what to do unto thee." I also had a dream which further convinced me. I thought I was at the point of death, and there seemed no help for me, and being in great agony, I covenanted with the Almighty that if He would spare me a little longer, there was nothing which He required of me but what I would give up to, through his grace assisting me,

and that the remainder of my days should be dedicated to his service. Immediately after I made this covenant I thought I saw myself recovered and in a plain garb, very neat and simple.

Shortly after this I attended a general meeting of Friends at Uwchlan, and preparatory thereto, as secretly as I could, I took the trimming off one of my plainest silk gowns and cut off the trail. I had also a black bonnet made without much trimming, which I wore instead of my hat and feathers. There was a considerable number of young girls in company, going to the meeting, and I endeavored to appear cheerful, but my heart was secretly engaged in cries to the Lord, that I might hear something that might be confirming to me, for I was then wavering whether or not I should join the Methodists. We accordingly went to meeting, and soon after I sat down a deep exercise covered my spirit. After some time, dear William Savery got up and spoke so exactly to my state that my heart was much broken and my spirit contrited within me. We lodged that night at a Friend's house, where dear William also was, who, with some other Friends, remarking our appearance to be in the gay line, wondered a little at our being there on such an occasion, but upon our telling them it was from a desire of attending the general meeting, they, in a pleasant manner,

expressed their approbation and spoke encouragingly to us.

After returning from this meeting the weight and necessity of putting on a plain dress seemed to increase, and one evening, when most of the family were gone from home, I sent to the shop for some plain gauze, and, by candle-light, with a darning needle, made a little round-eared cap. Next morning I arose early, but did not leave my chamber till the family had nearly all breakfasted, being upon my knees and earnestly petitioning to be rightly directed. After which I felt most easy to leave off my cushion and put on the cap I had made. When I went down stairs my father and mother and a little nephew were sitting at the table, and as I entered the room my father viewed me in a manner that somewhat affected me, so that I was obliged to retire a few minutes to give vent to my tears, in which time my father left the room and I took my seat at the table. But a small portion of breakfast served. My little nephew fixed his eyes on me in silent astonishment at the alteration. However, I was favored to keep in a degree of quiet, although it was indeed a deep trial to me to be thus exposed to the observation and remarks of my connections and acquaintances. But my dear sister and brothers continuing to treat me with their wonted respect and affection, my heart was, I

trust, made measurably thankful. I labored under a very heavy affliction from an inflammation in my eyes, occasioned by a cold taken some time before I changed my dress, and from not taking the necessary care when I left off my cushion, it became fixed in my eye. My health also appearing to decline from the great exercise of my mind, my parents sent me to the Yellow Springs, where I spent some weeks. It happened to be the time of the harvest frolic, and being persuaded by some company that were there for their health, I went to see them dance. But, oh, the distress of mind which I felt when entering the dancing room I cannot describe. I seemed as if I was in a fire, and could not stay many minutes, but walked in the balcony, and shortly after left the company and retired to my chamber, where I gave vent to many tears and earnestly besought forgiveness for what I had done, after which I felt a little quiet.

The springs did not prove effectual in restoring my eye, though my health was considerably mended. In the fall, it was thought necessary for me to go to Philadelphia and call a consultation of physicians, as my friends were apprehensive I should lose the sight, unless something could be done. The doctors proposed to scarify it, and I felt a willingness to submit to the operation, nor have I any doubt that this heavy affliction was in Divine wisdom, to

wean my affections from the world. But kind Providence did not suffer the operation to be performed, for, although they came many times with instruments in their pockets, my eye was never in a proper state to receive it. I continued to suffer extreme pain with it for twelve months, great part of which time I was under care of physicians; but after a time, being favored to seek to Him from whom all true help cometh, and my dependence withdrawn from those physicians of no value, in a firm reliance that the Lord would restore me in his own time, I became resigned, and, forever blessed be his holy name, He was indeed pleased to restore me without the aid of any human assistance. As He is pleased often to afflict for wise purposes, so He is graciously pleased to restore when those purposes are fulfilled.

Soon after my return from the city, in the fall, William Savery visited Pottstown Meeting, and I happened to be there. He appeared largely in testimony and spoke so exactly to my state, and his doctrine carried with it such an evidence, that I could no longer doubt the principle, and since that I do not remember ever to have omitted an opportunity which was put in my power to attend Friends' meetings. He also appeared in supplication, in one part of which my mind was so struck with the belief that I should be called into the ministry that it

caused me to tremble from head to foot. After meeting I invited him home with me, and he, having some recollection of me from seeing me at Uwchlan some time before, accepted the invitation. He presented me with a little book, for which I was very grateful, not for the value of the book, but because it was given as a token of regard from one to whom I felt my spirit nearly united. The next Fourth-day he proposed being at the Monthly Meeting at Exeter, whither my dear mother and myself went and attended the meeting for worship, and a memorable season it was to me. As we returned home it seemed as if the face of nature was changed, and I saw a large field of labor opened, and that the work was not to be done in a day or a month, but that it was a gradual, progressive work, and must go on step by step. For I had begun to conclude, after I had altered my gay appearance and given up all those vain amusements of which I was wont to partake, and feeling a degree of peace therein, that the work was completed, and I had nothing more to do, so was in danger of taking up a false rest. But He who began the work did not leave me here, but caused a renewed visitation of his love to be extended through this dear instrument. On Fourth-day evening he came in late and lodged, and in the morning, before we parted, had a solemn opportunity with us, in which season he addressed

me by name, imparting much counsel and encouragement, if faithfulness was kept to on my part; telling me also that the passage through this life was known, even by the most experienced, to be a continual warfare, which sealed truth I have since been feelingly sensible of, but as it was the first time I ever had been so singularly spoken to, it affected me much.

I had some time before this memorable visit from William Savery been greatly exercised about my music. Having a particular fondness for it and making considerable proficiency therein, I could not give it up until it was absolutely required, but after this renewed visitation it seemed like forbidden fruit, and I dare not touch it. However, not being thoroughly satisfied whether it would be required of me wholly to give it up, I wished to be rightly directed, and one night, going to bed under the impression, I dreamed I was playing, and as I touched the strings they broke under my fingers. This dream, with the feeling that attended my mind, convinced me the time was fully come for me to part with this idol also, which, though a long and continued cross, I was enabled to take up.

I remained steady in the attendance of meetings for above a year and a half before my mind felt at liberty to make application to be received as a member, but for twelve months preceding was con-

strained to use the plain language. In the fall, before I made application to be received among Friends, Job Scott, being out upon a religious visit, lodged at our house. My father was from home, and my mother and aunt with a beloved friend from the city and myself made up the family at that time, and truly it seemed as if the canopy of Divine love was spread over us, and celestial showers issuing from the Fountain of Life, descended upon our habitation. I had for some time been in a low spot, and longed for a drop of heavenly consolation: my dear mother also had her mind much unsettled by unprofitably conversing upon Swedenborg's opinions. There was likewise an elderly man in the neighborhood who had written a piece vainly endeavoring to account for things he ought not. This man happened to be at our little meeting, when dear Job, after sitting a short time in silence, got up with these words: "Who art thou, oh, man! oh, woman! who would of thine own finite understanding presume to investigate the mysteries of the inscrutable God?" The words were solemn and awakening, and he was favored to open matters clearly. It proved, I trust, an humbling season to some who were present. And through infinite condescension, this dear Friend, having a sitting in the family, was dipped into a sense of our state, and administered suitable counsel and encouragement.

Also in a little private opportunity, with tears flowing mutually from our eyes, he mentioned his sympathy with me and his prospect respecting me; telling me I should have trials, and to remember that it was told me I should have trials, which assuredly have since fallen to my lot.

About the middle of the ensuing winter, believing the time nearly arrived for me to make request to Friends to be received under their care, I mentioned it, in a solid manner, to my parents, though in great fear, and having mine eyes turned to the Lord, with earnest breathings that I might be strengthened and assisted in this important step. My mother was much affected and shed tears, but my father thought it was time enough yet to make such a sacrifice, that I was young and had better wait till I was more fixed. I was enabled to tell him that I was willing to give up the world and all the enjoyments of it for the purchase of a little peace, that I no longer took delight in those things that had formerly given me much pleasure. He, seeing my mind bent upon it, gave his consent, and the next meeting-day my mother went with me to Exeter. After the meeting she called two elderly Friends aside and told them she felt like Hannah when she made an offering of her son to the Lord, for she had come to make an offering of me, also telling them of my concern. They accordingly

took it under care, and, after divers visits from a solid committee of Friends, I was received in the Fifth Month, 1787.

I then found that, far from sitting down at ease, there was a large field of labor opened for me, and in the prospect thereof, my knees were made to tremble. I felt a deep concern to be steady in the attendance of meetings for worship and discipline, and being distantly situated from them, I found considerable difficulty, my father being frequently very averse to my going, particularly when the weather was wet or cold, which proceeded from motives of tenderness, but which, nevertheless, cost me no small degree of exercise, not feeling easy to stay at home on these accounts, when my health would admit of my going. And as it gave him great uneasiness and he frequently opposed me, I had often to experience seasons of conflict, sometimes for a week before a meeting for discipline occurred, and my heart was poured forth in prayer to Almighty God that, if it was right, I might have strength to persevere and that way might be opened for me, though I could see no way. And, forever blessed and praised be his holy name, He often caused the mountains to skip like rams and the little hills like lambs, to my humbling admiration. One time, I particularly remember, being appointed to attend the Quarterly Meeting, I asked my father's consent

to let me go; he looked sternly at me and objected. I felt in a great strait and pleaded much with him. He at last consented, but told me I need not expect to go again for some months, for he did not approve of women riding about the country in that manner. As I had gained his consent for the present, I was willing to leave my cause to the Lord, in the belief that if He required me to go, He would open the way for me, and, after retiring to my chamber and giving vent to many tears, my faith and confidence were renewed in Him who is the everlasting Rock of Ages. This was the last time my dear father ever spoke so sharply to me upon such an occasion, for, seeing my peace deeply concerned in the strict attendance of meetings, and my endeared mother often pleading with him, he gave up.

May all those who labor under difficulties and discouragements in attending meetings be encouraged to keep their eye single unto the Lord, with fervent breathings to Him; then, assuredly, He will open the way for them, even though they may seem to be hedged in on every side.

My exercises and deep baptisms in the prospect of being called into the work of the ministry greatly increased, but, oh, my unwillingness to close in therewith was more than words can express. My Divine Master saw meet to cause me to suffer long under a very trying dispensation, which was that

of my beloved and tender mother being tried with lingering illness, and there seemed but little prospect of her recovery. The thought of parting with this dear parent, together with the inward exercises of my mind, was almost more than nature could bear. Oh, the nights of anxiety and days of deep distress which I passed through at that time will never be erased from my remembrance. And in this season of deep affliction I was made willing to covenant, that if the Lord would spare my mother I would give up to what He required of me, though it was harder than the parting with my natural life. And He graciously condescended to listen to my cry and restored my endeared parent.

Previous to this I attended the opening of the Monthly Meeting at Robeson; there were also some Friends from the city attended it; one, in particular, in the course of his public testimony, was dipt into sympathy with us in the deep exercise which I was under, together with the prospect of some further trial and sore conflict which I should have to pass through, in order to fit and prepare me for the great and solemn work whereunto my Master was about to call me; which testimony, with the sensations that accompanied my mind, left no more doubt of its being myself that was alluded to, than if my name had been publicly mentioned. This circumstance, together with that

of many valuable Friends having feelingly sympathized with me, and expressed their prospect respecting me in a more private way, had a tendency to confirm me that the Lord did indeed require an entire surrender on my part and that I must be willing to become a fool for Christ's sake.

After many probations, secret tears and prayers to my Almighty Father for his help and gracious assistance in this awful, solemn work, at a Monthly Meeting held in Exeter, in the Twelfth Month, 1789, and in the twenty-second year of my age, after a season of the most severe conflict I ever before experienced, wherein the day of solemn covenant was brought before the view of my mind, with this secret intelligence, that if I did not give up to what was required of me, my mother should be taken from me, I ventured upon my feet and expressed a few words, in which I felt great peace, and believe I had the tender sympathy of most that were present. My esteemed friend, John Simpson, being there, in the language of encouragement, caused my heart to be truly thankful. He came home with me, and very feelingly expressed his unity with me, and also a fear lest, through diffidence, I should not sufficiently exert my voice. Which gentle hint was of use afterwards, though at that time, and frequently since, I did not expect ever to be called upon again

in the same line, which, peradventure, may not be unusual to those young in experience.

One circumstance I omitted in the early part of this narrative, which now occurs to my mind. A Friend visiting Pottstown Meeting, about twelve months before I became plain, and I, being in a very low and discouraged state, went to meeting, greatly desiring he might be made an instrument of comfort to me. He spoke a considerable time, but did not touch upon anything relative to my condition, and I returned home under many doubts and fears lest my Heavenly Father had cast me off forever. My parents were in Philadelphia, and being alone, I sat down on the sofa, with the Bible in my hand, thinking to gain some instruction and comfort from its sacred truths. I had given up the idea of seeking the Friend (who was a true father in Israel) or having any opportunity with him, as not being worthy of it, but, he, dining at my uncle's, not far distant, was, after dinner, walking in the piazza, and, looking towards our house, felt a draught in his mind to come over. He knew nothing of the family, but yielding to the impulse, he came, and passing through the outward room, where there was a young woman of the house, without asking any questions, he walked into the parlor, where I was sitting, in the situation above described, and without any further salutation than shaking hands,

took a seat by me. A considerable time elapsed in deep inward silence, after which he mentioned how unexpectedly he was led to come over, without knowing the cause; but then, feeling his mind clothed with sympathy for me and believing it was for my sake, he imparted much counsel and advice, with a great deal of encouragement to me. Which singular favor did deeply humble my heart and caused tears of gratitude, contrition and tenderness to stream from my eyes.

Having for my own satisfaction penned these few hints of my varied conflicts and exercises, and being sensible of the goodness of the Lord to me, his poor, unworthy creature, it is in my heart to say, may it please Thee, oh, most gracious, merciful Father, to bow down thine ear and hear the humble petition of thy hand-maid. Oh! be pleased to lay, with increasing weight, thine Almighty hand upon me. Let it not spare, neither let thine eye pity, until Thou hast thoroughly tried me, proved me and known my works. Be pleased to bring me more immediately under thy refining operation, and enable me to bear with true resignation every turning of thy holy hand, that so I may be purged and purified, fitted and qualified, rightly to engage in the awful and solemn work whereunto Thou hast called me. Or if, most gracious Lord, Thou art pleased to cut short thy work, oh! let it be in

righteousness, and grant me admittance into thine ever blessed kingdom of light, life and peace, there to join in the holy anthems of glory, glory, hallelujahs and praise to the Lord God and the Lamb, who art worthy forever, saith my soul. Amen and amen!

RUTH ANNA RUTTER.

